



City of Santa Barbara California

PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

REPORT DATE: September 2, 2012
AGENDA DATE: September 6, 2012
PROJECT: Traffic Growth Management
 Development Plan Ordinance
TO: Planning Commission
FROM: Planning Division, (805) 564-5470
 Rob Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner
 Bettie Weiss, City Planner
 John Ledbetter, Principal Planner
 Beatriz Gularte, Project Planner

I. INTRODUCTION

The Planning Commission last met on June 21, 2012 on this topic of traffic growth management and the proposed amendment to the City's Development Plan Ordinance. Staff presented a proposed framework for the city's *traffic growth strategy* consistent with the recently adopted General Plan. Today's meeting will be a work session with the intent to 1) further the Planning Commission's understanding of staff's proposal; 2) discuss the proposal's merits and Planning Commission's intention to manage traffic growth; and, 3) provide staff with the direction needed to draft a Traffic Growth Management Plan for adoption. At a subsequent meeting this plan will be presented to the Commission as one draft document that includes the land use growth strategies for recommendations to Council.

Traffic Growth Strategy

As has been discussed, the overall traffic growth strategy is to support the implementation of the General Plan and its diverse range of goals and policies. The General Plan envisions 1.35 million square feet of non-residential development and 2,800 new residential units to be build in the next 20 years. This buildout will create significant cumulative traffic impacts that are unavoidable. Staff's traffic growth strategy is to facilitate this incremental amount of development and at the same time, minimize the extent of congestion increases. The proposed strategy does this by focusing non-residential development in locations where it will generate less traffic and at the same time encouraging housing throughout the city.

At the work session, staff will present more details of the framework of the strategy. Staff will also show how the strategy is flexible and allows property owners to get entitlements for General Plan appropriate developments, regardless of location. Our presentation will focus on what developers can do now, versus what they will be able to do under the new strategy. The biggest shift in the traffic

growth strategy is moving from a process that was CEQA traffic impact driven to a system that is permissive of projects that are “plan appropriate.”

Focus Groups

Since Staff met with the Commission in June, we held two focus groups with long-term stakeholders (architects, planning consultations, traffic consultants, and land development attorneys). The three goals of the focus groups were to understand the staff proposal, learn how it could be different than the current system and in some instances allow more projects to proceed, and to include more public input on the subject during Planning Commission discussion and decision-making. These meetings were helpful to all involved as a greater understanding of the traffic growth strategy was achieved. We told the stakeholders that we are open to their input and insights of issues we may have missed. Some helpful input and concerns were discussed and staff will present the output of what we heard and the adjustments we have made in the proposal as it is being further drafted as an ordinance amendment and program.